

## **Will There be Blood on Your Hands?**

**I want to deal with a topic from the Scriptures having to do with the idea of missions and reaching sinners to tell them of their need to repent and come to Christ.**

**These are verses that have spoken to me for many years, and formed how I think and what I desire because they are what God said. I believe God and what He said ought to impact what and how we think.**

**The Apostle Paul was a great missionary who established many churches. At this time he was headed back to Jerusalem where he will become a prisoner and eventually be sent to Rome. He is near the end of his time of freedom. The whole sermon is in Acts 20, but we are going to look at one statement out of that sermon. He knows that his time of freedom is coming to a close and he is making an analysis of his time in Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, and a number of other scattered areas where he ministered. This is what he has to say about himself.**

**Acts 20:26- “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.”**

**This is a very simple statement but is often not very well understood. It is a very interesting statement. He is telling the them “ I am pure from the blood of all men.” Most people have no idea what that means. The Old Testament deals very clearly with this.**

**Isaiah 56:10- “ His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.”**

**Isaiah was a prophet long before the time of Jesus and therefore before the time of Paul. This was put in the Scriptures to make a statement about what the Lord intends for His people to become and what He wants them to be doing.**

**These are the people that He has to preach for Him. They were ignorant. They were dumb dogs. They were lazy. They just did not do what He wanted them to do. It is insulting that the people God had to speak and watch for men’s souls were**

not going to do it.

Isaiah 56:11- “Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.”

Self-centered or, the best definition of covetousness, greedy dogs. They never have enough. Covetous people are greedy; they want more, and when they get more that is still not enough. They still want more. Even if they cannot use it they will store it like a dog stores a bone. This is what they are doing- chasing after everything for themselves instead of doing what the Lord wanted them to do.

Isaiah 56:12- “Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.”

They call themselves sipping saints, but God puts them in the classification of what happens to disobedient people and He condemns it. They should have been watchmen but instead they were self-indulgent.

God is painting a picture step by step that becomes clearer as we go along.

Isaiah 62:6- “I have set the watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence.”

Here are some watchmen who are not lazy. They will speak as they are supposed to. So we have some watchmen who will do as they are told and some who will not. Of course the condition of the city is dependent on those who are supposed to be speaking out.

Jeremiah 6:17- “Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.”

We have those who do what they are supposed to, and those who do not; those who do right, and those who do not. This does not remove the responsibility of the watchmen, but it does put a load on those who had a chance to hear and chose not to follow. They may have heard it, but they did not hearken in the sense that they obeyed it. They did not want to hear what God’s messenger had to

say.

**Ezekiel 3:16-18 “And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me saying.”**

**(v.17)- “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.”**

**Many people do not like warnings. They do not want to hear it. They like nice things- compliments that make them feel good, but certainly not warnings of dangers to come. But God sends messengers to give the message of warning.**

**(v.18)- “When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in this iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”**

**Now we see the picture coming together a little more. God says they are wicked, they need to be warned; Go and warn them, but the messenger chooses not to go. This sounds like the same situation as is in Isaiah. They choose not to go and the wicked die. They do not escape the danger because the messengers choose not to deliver their message. They still die and they still suffer for their sins. Some messengers may say, “I don’t want to be accountable. I don’t want to be responsible. I don’t want to be involved. I have my own ideas. Let me eat. Let me sleep. Let me gather.”**

**Notice the end of the verse. “His blood will I require at thine hand.” The blood of the wicked is the on the hands of the messenger who does not deliver the message. That is a sobering thought. They suffer for their sins, but the messenger is marked with blood on their hands for each of the people that they should have warned.**

**There are several billion people in the world. Only 5% of the world’s population live in the United States. Only 10% of the world’s population speak English. Ninety percent of all preachers preach to the English-speaking population. Ninety percent try to speak to 10% of the people, and 90% of the people have only 10% of the preachers. It does not fit together well mathematically, but that is the**

**picture. Even some of those few preachers are like those in Isaiah who love their sleep, money, comfort, and ease and are not going to speak. God appoints His people to watch over men's souls and to warn the wicked. A lot of people want to spend all their time speaking to the righteous, but the wicked need to be warned. There is a hell to be shunned. There is a price to be paid for sin. You may think that is negative.**

**When I was a teenager I went visiting with a man who was maybe 50 or 55 years old. The general rule was that you would not knock on someone's door past 8:30 at night, but this gentleman would sometimes pound on people's doors at 10:00. He would pound until someone came to the door. When they finally came he would say "I apologize for reaching you so late, but I must warn you that there is a price to pay for sin and I want you to be delivered from hell where you must pay that price." He would look at me and say, "Pauly, if the house were on fire they wouldn't mind me knocking on the door, but they may be in a fire for all eternity if I don't."**

**He knew that people needed a warning or else they would die in their iniquity. He did not mind being a bearer of bad news because he would follow it with good news—They could miss hell and get to heaven. They could get their lives changed and be delivered out of the bondage of sin. He well knew that if he did not do what he was supposed to do for those that he could reach he would be responsible.**

**Some people may say, "Well, I can't reach everyone." That is true, but do not use that as an excuse for not reaching anyone. Find out who the "anybodies" are that you can reach and do it or their blood will be required at your hand. That is not necessarily in this life, though it may show up, but there is a judgment for the things done in the body whether they be good or bad. I would think that having blood required at my hand would not be good on judgment day.**

**(v. 19) "Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."**

**That is a very interesting statement, “ thou hast delivered thy soul.” Delivered it from what? When? Our soul needs to be delivered. That does not mean we are not saved, but there is a price to be payed in our soul. If we do not do right there is blood on our hands, but we can get our soul cleaned up and delivered in the terms of the whole eternity. Warn the wicked. You may think they are not going to change, but that does not make any difference. Our job is to warn them. What they do with our warning is their job. They will suffer if they go on in their sin, that is their problem. Our problem is have we done all we could to reach all we should? Have we delivered our soul or are we willing to go with blood being required at our hand? Bright red, crimson, human blood on our hands when we go to the judgment.**

**(v.20) “Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”**

**What about righteous people when they turn into sin? If they go on it is their problem, but we are to warn them lest they slide deeper and deeper into sin. If we do not warn them their blood will be on our hands and their sin will be on their soul.**

**(v.21) “Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.”**

**So your soul will be delivered if they do turn or if they do not turn. When there are wicked people or righteous people headed into sin, if you speak you have delivered your soul. If you do not speak you will get blood on your hands.**

**God is painting a picture and now the details are becoming a little clearer. It was a murderer who said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Of course we are! We are accountable to speak to them according to their need. We are asked how they are to hear unless someone tells them? “ How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach**

unless they be sent?" You speak to those you can. You supply others with the finances and prayers so that they can reach those that you cannot . We are told to reach the whole world. We should reach as many as we can as completely as we can. Otherwise, we will be laying around living for ourselves. We have a responsibility and accountability to reach others with the gospel warning. We must tell them that they must either repent or perish.

Ezekiel 33:1-4 "Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of my people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head."

This sounds a similar to the other case we saw, but in this case it is not God putting a watchman on the wall but the people hiring a guard to alarm them if the enemy is coming. If the guard gives the warning and the people do not heed it and they suffer for it that was their choice. They pay the price. The watchman had been hired by the people. What would they do if he did not do right? They would suffer and it would be his fault. He had a job. As Christians we have a job.

(v. 5) "He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul."

A person that will listen can have their soul delivered from what they would have suffered if they had not listened to the warning.

(v. 6) "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

That is a very sobering thought. God is saying the same thing again so that if you did not get it the first time you can get it the second time. If you got it the first time this is reinforcement. Repetition is the

**first law of learning. God wants this to sink deep into our soul.**

**(v. 7) “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.”**

**Just like that watchman against the invading army, the Lord has made us a watchman against people who are loaded down with sin. He has given us what we are to say.**

**(v. 8) “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”**

**They will suffer for their own sin, but we will also suffer if we could have, should have and did not warn them.**

**(v. 9) “Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”**

**We have a soul and it needs deliverance. We must do what is expected of us rather than leaving the wicked without a warning.**

**(v. 10) “Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?”**

**What kind of life is it living in sin? The world loves it, but the world is blind. Maybe the preachers are also blind and dumb that should have warned them about it. There is a price that has to be paid for sin in this life and forever and ever. They must be warned. It is not easy to go into a culture that says, “We can do without marriage. We can live together without it.” and tell them that such a lifestyle is sin that God judges. Culturally these acts may be acceptable, but to God they are not. In much of Brazil, Madagascar, and other countries they may have no problem with that, but someone must warn them that judgment is building up against them. We need to support gospel watchman who will go and watch for men’s souls. If people do not like the message it shows what is in their hearts. We are not**

trying to be cruel, but it is their only hope through all of eternity. We must finance and pray for such work. God has told us to go into all the world, not just to those who like the message. You may find some who, when they find out what sin is, are not willing to turn from it. It must be explained to them that drunkenness is sin, and that the judgment of God is on those who sell and serve it.

(v. 11) “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have not pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

The Lord is not happy about a lost person dying. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. It may stop the spread of the disease or end the lengthening record that they are building up for judgment, but he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner. He does it for the good of others and maybe for the sake of that soul, but why would someone want that kind of end to their life. “Why will ye die?” Those of us who are saved have a duty to warn them. Deliver your soul or have blood on your hands. Can you imagine white robes and scarlet hands there among the saints? You would not want to lift up your hands in praise- they are covered in blood. You want to pray- your hands are covered in blood. You want to worship- your hands are covered in blood.

Our prayers will produce laborers to warn the wicked. We are not to just house, feed, and clothe them, we are to warn them of their sin and what it is going to cost them. We must do some what is called “sin-killing” preaching, “sin-killing” witnessing. The sin issue must be addressed or we will go with blood-red hands into eternity. O what an awful thing that would be to be marked for not having done our job. God will hold us accountable. There is a result for the wicked and there is a result for the watchman. We are to give warning to sinners and to any Christians who have fallen back into sin. They may not heed the warning, but some warnings gracious but clear must be given that what a man sows that he will reap. They are going to have a terrible harvest. They may make it one hundred years here



**on earth in their sin, but they will have infinite millions of years to pay the price. Warn them and be a friend to them. Warn them and care about their soul. Warn them and take care of your own soul. Some may turn.**

**The devil and the world will try to fill our minds with excuses to justify disobedience to the Almighty. The Bible tells us to “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15 tells us what we are to do, and Mark 16:16 tells what happens according to their response.**

**Acts 20:26 “Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men.”**

**Can you see Paul’s gnarled, hard-working hands? He says, “Take a look. I am pure from the blood of all men. I have done what I could, what I should. I have chosen to do what is right. I have warned the wicked of their iniquity so that there is no blood on these hands.” That is what he was saying. Now, the world will tell you that you can never reach everybody. It will never work. Paul said, “ I did all I could, all I should. I am clean. My soul is delivered.” You cannot reach everybody, but you ought to reach somebody. Do not be soft on sin. Be clear. Warn them as if there were an invading army after them or their sin will swallow them.**

**Some missionaries find their support decreased if they do not have great results and those who have great results get more support. Our job is to warn, but we cannot decide for them. If it is our responsibility to bring results, Paul was a failure at Athens. Jesus did not have that many followers and he was Almighty God. He trained them, taught them, and sent them, and the number of believers more than doubled at Pentecost- after He had left the earth. I know a person who once a month would cross the boarder into Mexico. He was a missionary to Mexico in his prayer letters to the churches. He would go into the market place and ask someone to take a picture. Then he would ask them a question and get them to raise their hands and he would say that there were that many decisions made in this market place. The question was, “Who would like some free ice cream?” He would take them all to get**

ice cream and they would be ready to come back the next month and do it again. He got excellent support working one day a month, giving away ice cream because he had so many “decisions.” It is not the numbers game, we must warn the wicked to flee from their sins and to Jesus. We should support missionaries who are doing just that.

“Why will ye die in your sin?” Warn them. There is no good reason for sinners to stay in their sins. Their response is their responsibility.

There are countries one after another who have had laborers, prayers, and finances poured into them. We cannot just hand a missionary a check and say, “Stop by next time you’re around.” We must work with them in prayer. They need to be able to count on us to hold up their special needs in prayer. But all those who should be watchman are not. God have mercy on their blood-stained hands and their undelivered soul.

What can we do to get the gospel out? How much can we believe God for? Some people give over half of their pre-tax income to missions. They may not be living high but they will live On High for all eternity. They have unvested in eternity. They have spent their bodies, their time, and their lives to warn sinners. There is a responsibility to get the message out. There will be an accountability as to whether we have done what we should. He gave us His Word. It is our responsibility to get it out.